

Remarks

Claims 1 and 3-19 are pending in the application. Claim 1 and 6 are currently amended, and claims 18-19 are newly added. Support for these claim amendments can at least be found in the drawings and in paragraphs [0035] and [0040] of the application as published. Claims 13-17 were withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner.

Claim rejections

Section 112

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested in view of the amendment set forth above.

Section 102

Claims 1, 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Bonk et al. (US 2001/0001052) ("Bonk"). The Applicant respectfully traverses. The Applicant's undersigned representative can find no description of an internal manifold in Bonk, smooth or otherwise. Accordingly, Bonk in no way anticipates the present claims. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-6 and 8-13 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Unkle et al. (U 3,717,505) ("Unkle").

With respect to claim 1, Unkle does not support the rejection for at least the reason that Unkle does not disclose or suggest an internal manifold that is formed so as to pass through the entire stacked cells and the separators in a cell-stacking direction.

The Office Action cites component 35 in FIG. 3A as a manifold; however, as can be seen in this figure, component 35 does not pass through the separators in a cell-stacking direction. Instead, component 35 is formed only in an end plate 29 and is parallel to the planes of cells 15, and therefore transverse to a cell-stacking direction of cell stack 11.

Next, the Office Action also cites component 37. Assuming for argument's sake that the fitting 37 of FIGS. 3A and 4 may be properly construed as a manifold, the fitting

still does not extend through the entire stacked cells and the separators in a cell-stacking direction as required by claim 1.

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, claim 1 and its dependent claims are patentable over the cited references.

It is also noted that the Office Action states (last paragraph of page 3), "In regard to claims 5 and 11, the Hartvigsen et al. reference discloses bonding and sealing the frame (Column 2, Lines 11-14)." However, Hartvigsen was not cited to reject the claims.

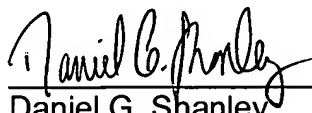
Conclusion

In light of the above discussion, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4420 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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